

From: John Tebbutt
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/25/02 11:33am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To Whom It May Concern,

I write to register my opposition to the Revised Proposed Final Judgement in the case United States v. Microsoft.

In particular, I write in support of Mr. Dan Kegel's "Open Letter to the DoJ, Re: Microsoft Settlement" (<http://www.kegel.com/remedy/letter.html>), and to confirm that I am a signatory to Mr. Kegel's letter. In my opinion, Mr. Kegel states the case against the Proposed Final Judgement both elegantly and comprehensively, and there is little that I can add in terms of specific information.

The findings of fact in this case demonstrate that Microsoft has done everything in its power to stifle competition, not by building superior products, but through restrictive business practices and by using its sheer economic might in the industry to buy out or litigate away competition.

I am a computer scientist by profession, and have been since 1984. In my opinion, the single most important factor in the dramatic growth of the market for information technology has been the commoditization of personal computer hardware. Intense competition between PC component suppliers has driven down the cost of the electronic components required to build a PC dramatically over the last decade, while at the same time spurring enormous improvements in the quality and functionality of those components. The result is that many homes can now afford computer systems of such power that they would have been unthinkable outside of a corporate budget only a decade ago.

Contrast this with the situation in software, and particularly operating systems, for these same machines. Microsoft cornered the lion's share of the PC market at an early stage, through luck more than judgement, and by placing their emphasis on the the profit to be made by the premature shipping of products at the expense of product quality control (which is to say at the expense of the consumer).

Thus, Microsoft has grown as a company by reliance on the innocence of the consumer and the colossal increases in the capabilities of PC hardware. And it continues to do so. Microsoft does not innovate, and never has. While there have been huge advances in computer science over the last decade,

Microsoft's products have grown steadily slower, more "bloated", less reliable and less secure. Moreover, as the facts in this case show, Microsoft acts to stifle innovation where such innovation might threaten its monopoly.

In the United States we now have an IT infrastructure, a large part of which is constantly being compromised by viruses, worms, trojans, and other forms of attack. This represents a huge vulnerability to cyberterrorism, and is a direct result of Microsoft's casual attitude towards product quality, and particularly towards security issues. This, in turn, comes as a result of Microsoft's monopoly in the PC operating system market. There has never been an incentive for them to improve their product quality because there has never been anybody with a reasonable shot at competing with them.

The Proposed Final Judgement does little or nothing to curb Microsoft's monopoly (as Mr. Kegel's letter amply demonstrates), and thus in effect maintains the threat to homeland security that this monopoly has fostered. In times when our nation is under threat, this settlement is doubly unacceptable.

As a citizen and a taxpayer, I am shocked, saddened and furious that the federal government should take so much time and spend so many taxpayer dollars on this case, only to effectively admit that somehow it was wrong to bring the case in the first place.

Sincerely,

John Tebbutt
10840 Gambrill Park Road
Frederick, MD 21702-1618

dettifoss@yahoo.com

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